

# Book Reviews

Coming together to succeed

In an increasing number of businesses today, the interdependence of products or parts and the facility of all firms to innovate, means that even the biggest and seemingly most powerful companies are components in networks. They have to take note of what others in the network are doing or demanding. Nowhere is this more evident than in high-technology fields based on specific platforms, the foundations on which other companies build the products or offer their services.

In their new book *Platform Leadership* Annabelle Gawer and Michael Cusumano offer a framework - The Four Levers of Platform Leadership - for companies to design and test a strategy, given the environment of the industry and the competence of the organization.

The book analyses the strategies of Intel, Microsoft, Cisco, Palm, Linux and NTT DoCoMo because these firms have driven

innovation in their industries and controlled the direction of complementary innovation in ways that were useful to them but also provided business opportunities for other companies. They looked after themselves while looking after others in the platform network.

This is the strength of the book. It forces managers to create business strategies that consider an entire industry. It shows how the whole network can be greater than the sum of its parts if firms work together and follow a leader. Whether you see your firm in the role of leader or simply a successful member of the network, this book sets out clear paths and illustrates them with stimulating, and sometimes, surprising examples.

Note: an executive education programme on *Platform Leadership* is under development at INSEAD. IQ

Contact: [annabelle.gawer@insead.edu](mailto:annabelle.gawer@insead.edu)

Knowledge



## Platform Leadership:

How Intel, Microsoft and Cisco Drive Industry Innovation

Annabelle Gawer and Michael A. Cusumano

Harvard Business School Press, 2002